



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CONTACT JASON MILLER
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
PHONE (302) 577-8949
CELL (302) 893-8939
Jason.Miller@state.de.us

Media Release

September 19, 2008

Biden Announces New Measures to Combat Senior Abuse

Senior Protection Initiative will increase educational outreach, establish statewide task force to combat the crimes of financial exploitation, physical abuse, and neglect

Wilmington, DE – Today, Attorney General Beau Biden announced new measures to stand up for seniors and identify and prosecute criminals who commit crimes against them.

“Through the Senior Protection Initiative the Delaware Department of Justice is redoubling its efforts to prosecute those who have committed senior abuse, encourage victims to come forward, and bring together state agencies, law enforcement, and advocates to tackle these crimes,” Attorney General Biden stated.

Attorney General Biden noted that seniors are often victimized by members of their own families who are responsible for their care. Victims usually don’t report these crimes because they are afraid of retaliation, they are ashamed, or they don’t know where to turn for help. The statistics are startling: it is estimated that as many as 5 million seniors are victimized every year across the United States and that for every reported case of senior abuse, 5 are unreported.

The Delaware Department of Justice Senior Protection Initiative consists of three components:

1. Public Education. The Department of Justice will expand its public outreach with programs that encourage victims to report their abuse, highlight the signs of senior abuse, and educate seniors about ways to avoid being a victim.
2. Law Enforcement Education. The Department of Justice will provide training to police agencies about ways to detect physical abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation to ensure that police recognize the signs of senior abuse.
3. The creation of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). Elder abuse programs nationwide have successfully employed MDTs to open channels of communication between prosecutors, police, and social services representatives. These teams meet regularly to identify, respond to, and monitor reported abuse, as a result, prosecutors become aware of cases earlier and react more quickly, along with police, to gather evidence, build a case, and facilitate arrests.

Attorney General Biden named Deputy Attorney General Marsha White, a 20-year Department of Justice prosecutor, to lead the Senior Abuse Initiative as the first Senior Protection Deputy. She will serve as a central point-of-contact for all senior abuse cases and will have the authority to determine whether criminal or civil action should be taken.

Delaware's Multi-Disciplinary Team will consist of staff from the Department of Justice, Adult Protective Services, and state and local law enforcement. Beginning in October, 2008 the Delaware MDT will meet each month in every county.

#